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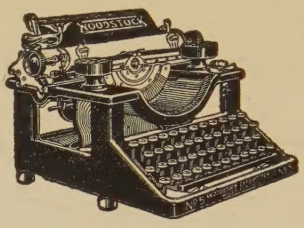

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Yale Divinity Quarterly

VOL. XIV JANUARY, 1918 No. 3

A CRITICISM OF SAMUEL BUTLER'S "THE WAY OF ALL FLESH," WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ITS THEOLOGY.

J. C. PRYOR.

George Bernard Shaw pays his acknowledgements to Butler and his novel, "The Way of All Flesh," in characteristic language. In the preface to his "Major Barbara" he writes, "It drives one almost to despair of English Literature when one sees so extraordinary a study of English life as Butler's posthumous 'Way of All Flesh' making so little impression that when, some years later, I produce plays in which Butler's extraordinarily fresh, free and future-piercing suggestions have an obvious share. I am met with nothing but vague cacklings about Ibsen and Nietzsche. . . . Really, the English do not deserve to have great men."

After reading the book itself, however, the ordinary person does not greatly wonder at the lack of appreciation of which Shaw complains. For while the story is undoubtedly interesting both as a narrative of events and as a study of character its subtly ironical treatment of much that nearly every one holds sacred is hardly calculated to commend it to the good graces of the reading public. When the average congregation of fairly prosperous Christians, members of the great middle class, is characterized as men and women who would be equally horrified at hearing the Christian religion doubted, and at seeing it practised, it is not strange that the reading public, which is composed so largely of just the class that is so ruthlessly attacked should fail to take kindly to the weapon that has been directed against them.

The book purports to be the life history of Ernest Pontifex, traced in considerable detail from the time when he abode in the loins of his great grandparents until he arrived at the age of forty-seven. His godfather, Edward Overton, who tells the story, is a preacher's son who has chosen a literary career and specializes in burlesque. He makes no mention of the hero until he has covered nearly three-quarters of a hundred pages with an account of the Pontifex character as revealed in each of the three generations preceding Ernest. Why this should be considered necessary is easily understood in the light of the statement: "If a man is to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, he must do so, not only as a little child, but as a little embryo, or rather as a little zoosperm—and not only this, but as one that has come of zoosperms which have entered into the Kingdom of Heaven before him for many generations." That Ernest, despite the bias toward the opposite kingdom imparted in zoosperm after zoosperm does eventually enter the Kingdom of Heaven is due to the fact that he is persuaded at last to give up father and mother for Christ's sake. He is saved, indeed, but so as by fire. That the writer's conception of the Kingdom of Heaven and of what it means to give up father and mother for Christ's sake is peculiarly his own, to which very few if any would assent, matters not at all. In fact he delights in his isolation and likes to manifest a contemptuous pity toward those who fail to agree with him. Whether Butler has no intention of being serious but only of being clever at all cost, or whether the attitude is one which he has deliberately chosen, as a literary artist, because he considers it appropriate to a writer of burlesque, or whether his convictions actually differ so widely from those of the majority of his fellowmen as the acceptance of the book as a serious work would indicate is difficult to determine. Very likely the reading of some of his other works would be of value in helping one to form an opinion here; but for that there has been no time. It seems best for our present purpose to proceed with the assumption that the views of Edward Overton are the author's own, as are also those of the hero's aunt Alethia, and those of the hero himself after his conversion from Christianity.

A resume of the story, one that is as brief as possible, seems in order at this point.

A Mr. and Mrs. Pontifex of Paleham, where the supposed writer's father has the living, are introduced at the beginning. The old man is pretty much of a jack of all trades, being a carpenter by trade, having served as parish clerk, and possessing no inconsiderable aptitude for art and music. He has builded two organs with his own hands, one for the church and the other for his own home. Despite the number of irons he has in the fire he prospers materially and is universally respected among those who know him. The wife is described as "a tall, square-shouldered person who had insisted on being married to Mr. Pontifex when he was young and too good-natured to say nay to any woman who wooed him." Their life toegther is not unhappy, however, since the husband "soon learned to bow before the wife's more stormy moods." From Mrs. Pontifex, their one child, Robert, a son of their old age, seemed to derive the greater part of his nature. The key to Robert's character from first to last is revealed in the assertion that, "He had a good healthy sense of meum, and as little of tuum as he could help." While yet a boy he is taken in charge by his maternal aunt's husband, a publisher of religious books, and comes at last, after the uncle's death, to own the business. This, together with the dowry of the woman he marries makes him rich, tho he is ever trying to impress his children, of whom there are five, three girls and two boys, of the fact that he finds it hard to meet the expenses to which he is put in their behalf. He is a thorough believer in the wisdom of the Biblical injunction, "Spare the rod and spoil the child;" and John and Theobald learn very early to their cost that he has no intention of sparing it. He is greatly admired not only as a good man, but also for his taste in art, which accords with that of the accepted critics of his day. Of a diary which he wrote while in Europe proper Overton says, "I felt as I read it that the author before starting had made up his mind to admire only what he thought it would be creditable in him to admire, to look at nature and art only thru the spectacles that had been handed down to him by generation after generation of prigs and impostors." Theobald's feeling toward his father is abject fear. He is not naturally attracted toward the church, but when his father decides that it would be well for a religious publisher to give one of his sons to the church and that Theobald ought to be

that son he dares not offer any objections. There is an outward show of liberty but when Theobald presumes to suggest an intention of acting as though he were free to choose such pressure is brought to bear upon him in the shape of threats, very real indeed for all the covert nature of the language in which they are couched, that he makes haste to accept ordination as soon as he is ready for it. That Theobald, for all his timidity is yet his father's own son appears even in early childhood when upon one occasion he beat his nurse and teased her, and when she said she should go away cried out, "You shan't go away—I'll keep you on purpose to torment you." Shortly after his ordination Theobald is engaged to assist for six successive Sundays the rector of Crampsford, a Mr. Allaby. The real reason for this is not the rector's need of help in his church duties but his need of a husband for one of his five unmarried daughters. The young ladies play a game of cards to see which shall have Theobald and Christina, who is four years older than the intended victim, is successful. The wooing is long, and the engagement is still longer, but the mariage is finally effected and the couple settle down at Battersby-on-the-Hill where Theobald has become rector. Three children, two sons and a daughter, are born to them, of whom the oldest, Ernest, is the hero of the book.

Theobald takes the same sort of course in bringing up Ernest as had been taken in his own upbringing, with the result that there is no love between him and his offspring. Christina is fond of her boy but her illusion that whatsoever Theobald does must of necessity be right causes her to deliver Ernest into the hands of his father so often that she eventually forfeits his love also. The slightest offense is regarded as good excuse to inflict punishment, even the childish pronunciation of come as tho it were spelled t-u-m is judged to be evidence of self-will and the child's will must by all means be "broken." In due season Ernest is taken to Roughborough Grammar School, head-master Dr. Skinner, and enrolled as a pupil there. Here he enjoys a larger share of freedom than had been his at home, tho the head-master was too much like his father for him to be really happy. He was not fond of study and did as little of it as he could. The coming of his Aunt Alethia into the school neighborhood marks an epoch in his life. She encourages him in his taste for music

and helps him in many ways. But she dies long before his course is finished, leaving her fortune to him, in care of his godfather, who is to keep it until Ernest is twenty-eight years old. This provision is not known either by Ernest himself or by any of the members of his family, it being made to appear that Overton is himself the heir. From Roughborough Ernest goes to Cambridge. Toward the end of his course here he is profoundly moved by a sermon preached by a Mr. Hawke and decides to be ordained, which in good time is attended to. He becomes a curate in one of the central parts of London. Here he falls an easy prey to the designs of a fellow curate by the name of Pryer Pryer persuades him that the world's supreme need is a College of Spiritual Pathology. Ernest puts his legacy from his grandfather, £2,500, into Pryer's hands, who speculates with it in the hope of gaining enough to start the college. In the meantime Ernest rooms at the house of a Mrs. Jupp in one of the poorer quarters of the city. He thinks that the poor people will come to him for spiritual advice and assistance, but after a while gets tired of waiting for that to occur and decides to take the initiative; beginning with some of the lodgers in his own lodging-house. He decides to begin with a heavy drinking man whose favorite amusement is wife beating, but when Mr. Holt opened the door and put his head out, and saw Ernest, "he made an unpleasant, not to say offensive movement, which might or might not have been directed at Ernest, and looked altogether so ugly that my hero had an instantaneous and unequivocal revelation from the Holy Spirit that he should continue his journey upstairs at once. . . . and begin by converting Mr. and Mrs. Baxter, the Methodists in the top floor front." Instead of converting them, however, he narrowly escapes being converted by them. He next assails Mr. Shaw, a reputed infidel, who advises him to read the accounts of the Resurrection correctly without mixing them up and then pay him another visit if he should feel so inclined. Ernest follows the advice and in consequence is led to disbelieve in Christianity. Before this effect is complete, however, he visits a Miss Snow, who also lives in the same house with him, having decided beforehand to try to convert her and having arranged for the visit thru his landlady. He has hardly begun to converse with her when a young man whom he had known at Roughbour-

ough and Cambridge bursts into the room, saying, "I've come before my time." In a flash Ernest comes to understand that what he really desires is something very different from trying to help young ladies spiritually, and having heard Mrs. Baxter say that Miss Maitland—another lodger—and Miss Snow are birds of a feather, he concludes that since he cannot now see Miss Snow he will see Miss Maitland. Overton records the result thus: About ten minutes after we last saw Ernest, a scared, insulted girl, flushed and trembling, was seen hurrying from Mrs. Jupp's house as fast as her agitated state would let her, and in another ten minutes two policemen were seen also coming out of Mrs. Jupp's, between whom there shambled rather than walked our unhappy friend Ernest, with staring eyes, ghastly pale, and with despair branded upon every line of his face."

Ernest is given six months at hard labor for his attempted assault. An attack of brain fever coming on he spends part of this time in the hospital. Upon his release he tries to get work as a tailor, having learned something of that trade in prison, and being nearly without funds, since Pryer has absconded with that part of his fortune which has not been lost on the stock exchange. He is unable to get work and decides to go to Mrs. Jupp and ask her for advice, but on the way he meets a young woman who had worked in his home at Battersby some years ago, and been turned off by his father and mother because of the discovery that she was soon to become a mother. She advises him to rent a house and start a little shop of his own, buying, mending and selling second-hand clothes. He agrees to do so provided she will come with him, promising as soon as possible to marry her. This is done, and for a time they prosper. But Ellen has become addicted to drink and while she tries to keep sober and succeeds for a little while her habit soon masters her again. She hides this from Ernest as long as she can, but he finds out what is the matter at last. From this time on his life is miserable, but he sticks by his bargain until he meets the old coachman who has been turned off by his father years before for interfering in Ernest's behalf and learns that the coachman is Ellen's legal husband. He is overjoyed to find himself free once more. At this juncture Overton offers him a position in connection with the management of what is in reality, tho he does not suspect it, his own

fortune, and having satisfied Ellen by the promise of a pound a week, and put his two children by her under the care of a family that had attracted him he becomes once more one of the class of "gentlemen."

His arrival at his twenty-eighth birthday finds Ernest master of a fortune of £70,000. He does not intend to tell his parents of this, feeling that it would be far too cruel a blow to inflict upon them, but he receives word from his father, whom he has not seen since the day he left prison at which time he gave his parents definitely to understand that they must go their separate ways thenceforward, informing him that his mother is very ill and asking him to come home. He goes and stays at Battersby until his mother's death, soon after. Ernest does not marry. He devotes himself to writing and publishing books attacking the accepted religious, social and scientific creeds of the day. Naturally he is not popular, nor do his writings have a ready sale. But he persists, hoping that a younger generation will listen to him more readily than his own.

The title page of the story bears the text, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God." Butler seems to place his hero high among the ranks of the Deity lovers and to consider that all his experiences did work together for his good. The use of Scriptural language is quite frequent tho it is seldom used with any sense of reverence. If he can give it a twist that invalidates its meaning he is well pleased. For example he quotes, "O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken," and has the "all" printed in italics.

It is noteworthy that almost without exception the person who throughout life is represented as receiving the respect and admiration of practically all acquaintances is made the butt of scorn and ridicule, while the one whose character and conduct is generally judged as reprehensible is most highly regarded. The reader feels that he has been transported into some topsy-turvy land where white is black and black white, evil good, and good evil, sweet bitter and bitter sweet. The impression of unreality abides throughout. A man may deceive others, and even himself, as to his real character for a time, no doubt; but that most of the main persons in a book should be such deceivers, and should succeed in it until death, and beyond death, is scarcely calculated to make

an impression of reality. Preachers are the favorite objects of attack. It may be, of course, that the fact that the present critic is a preacher and that one of the least admirable characters in the book bears the name of Pryer should be taken into account in evaluating this criticism.

Not is the story so much as in the comments in connection with certain events which are described do we discover the philosophy of life which the book upholds. For one thing there is a pretty thorough going hedonism. In the chapter devoted to an estimate of the character of George Pontifex following that which records his death, such statements are made as these: He has spent his life best who has enjoyed it most. God will take care that we do not enjoy it any more than is good for us. Goodness is naught unless it tends towards old age and sufficiency of means. The psalmist says, "The righteous shall not lack anything that is good." Either this is mere poetical license, or it follows that he who lacks anything that is good is not righteous. For most men, and most circumstances, pleasure—tangible material prosperity in this world —is the safest test of virtue. Pleasure, after all, is a safer guide than either right or duty. Not only is a bald hedonism taught, but pleasure is identified with both material wealth and moral goodness. Evidently Butler would have made an ideal "Job's comforter." Thus is our judgment of "The Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" who could say, "The foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the son of man hath not where to lay his head" accused of folly. His very poverty and sorrow proves Him to have been without virtue. Others whom we are accustomed to think of as benefactors of our race, men who have sacrificed themselves to help and serve their fellows are all, like Him, declared guilty of vice. Butler might deny this, but it follows logically from the language quoted. In the light of present conditions, when millions are asking not, How may we find money and enjoyment for ourselves? but, How may we best spend ourselves in the interests of human freedom and enlightenment? such a doctrine is particularly obnoxious.

Possessing such an opinion of what constitutes virtue it is not strange that he cannot get up any great enthusiasm in advocacy of virtue. Indeed he does not hesitate to speak a few good words for vice. "There is no useful virtue," he says, " which has not

some alloy of vice, and hardly any vice, if any, which carries not with it a little dash of virtue; virtue and vice are like life and death, or mind and matter—things which cannot exist without being qualified by their opposite."

The summary fashion in which he overthrows the whole of Christianity, with the exception of its fundamental moral principles, is somewhat amusing. He seems to think that the differences in the various accounts of the resurrection are sufficient proof that Christianity is a religion founded on falsehood. Even if Christianity were dependent, as he seems to assume, upon the actual bodily resurrection of the man Jesus his argument against it would be extremely weak. It would be easy to account for the differences noted by referring them to the lapse of time between the event and its narration and the human equation. Even today no two eyewitnesses to any event would tell precisely the same story even if they were to tell it five minutes after its occurrence, no matter how upright and truthful they might be. But when we base the doctrine of the resurrection, as more and more are coming to do, upon an insight into the value of the life and character of Christ and of all that is Christ-like, such argument as Butler depends upon strikes us as totally beside the mark. It doesn't matter in the least what became of the mortal body of the man Jesus, or what has become of the mortal body of any man, we are as sure as we can be of anything which lies beyond our present powers of sight, touch, etc., that the life of the Christ and of the Christ-like cannot perish; and it is upon this assurance that men are coming to base their faith in their allegiance to Christianity.

While rejecting Christianity as a religion, our author yet wishes to retain the name Christian as the finest title that can be ascribed to anybody. He has his own definition of a Christian, of course. "He who takes the highest and most self-respecting view of his own welfare which it is in his power to conceive, and adheres to it in spite of conventionality, is a Christian whether he knows it and calls himself one, or whether he does not." The trouble with this definition, it seems to me, is not so much that it is untrue as that it is an example of misplaced emphasis. If a man conceives his own welfare in terms of his value to society and in the light of Christ's example all well and good. But the words

as they stand would seem to indicate that it is self and not society that is being regarded supremely; and a knowledge of the context in which the definition appears serves to confirm this judgment. Ernest has come out of prison, thankful to have escaped the life of a preacher even at such a cost, no longer having any ambition to benefit men spiritually, or even materially, determined to cut himself loose from his parents, and anxious chiefly to live to himself and for himself. It is his giving up of father and mother that the author is speaking of in particular as a Christian act.

The God who presides over the destinies of those whose careers are followed in "The Way of All Flesh," is certainly not the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In fact while the name of God appears continually and the existence of God is assumed throughout yet one can scarcely say that a genuinely personal God is to be discerned in its pages. There is quite a little talk of Fortune and of Nemesis, but little or no sign of such a God as we have learned to believe in and to worship. Those who profess to believe in God and to have consecrated themselves to His service are almost invariably worshippers of self and of Mammon. They make an outward show of godliness so as to deceive even the elect yet they are without natural affection even for those who should be nearest and dearest if blood is indeed thicker than water. Yet they prosper, which, as we have already seen, our author regards as sufficient evidence that they are virtuous enough for all practical purposes.

The main purpose of the book seems to be an attack upon marriage and the family relations. In this the spirit manifested is wholly that of an iconoclast, there is not the faintest suggestion of anything constructive. He contents himself with holding the home institution, which the major portion of our race has come to look upon as the most basic and vital of all institutions, up to ridicule while offering nothing in its place. Love as a motive for marriage is ruled out of court utterly. The pair who come the nearest to love, Overton and Alethea Pontifex, do not marry, the reason for which the reader is left to guess for himself. Those who do marry are either victims of the wiles of the opposite sex or, if they take the initiative are impelled by sordid motives. The men are usually the victims. They are inveigled through various pretexts to the homes of their future wives where the feminine

arts prove too much for them and they are forced to succumb. The women are usually impelled by the horror of being old maids. The only marriage which does have a slight modicum of affection mixed with it as a motive for its taking place, that of the hero himself, turns out to have been no marriage at all. When all things have finally worked together for the hero's good, and as a rich bachelor he turns his attention to writing things which most people do not like, one of his main objects of attack is the marriage relation. There is no mention, however, of divorce. All of those who marry do manage to live together until the death of one of them. But the life is unpleasant. When Ernest's mother dies his father repeats at frequent intervals; "She has been the comfort and mainstay of my life for thirty years, but one could not wish it prolonged," and he causes to be engraved on the stone which marks her grave, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." But when the funeral rites have ended, he resumes the even tenor of his way without again making mention of her. His parishioners think this due to a profound grief which finds the greatest consolation in silence, but those who know him more intimately, especially those of his immediate family, attribute it to the fact that he never really cared for his wife. Neither does he have any affection for his children, and they reciprocate. When he dies, Joey, who has followed in his father's footsteps in that he has become a preacher, burns his father's old sermons and tries to get rid of everything that might remind him of his father. Ernest often bewails the fact that children cannot be born, like Melchezedek, without father and mother, and when he has children of his own he entrusts them to strangers, confining his relationship with them to financial support, because he believes that otherwise he would be certain to make their lives as miserable as his own parents had made his. That such home life as Butler has portrayed did exist, and that something along the same general lines might be found occasionally today, it is not difficult to believe, although even at that one can hardly help feeling that the picture is greatly exaggerated. But the trouble is that the book practically asserts that the conditions described are not exceptional, but the rule; and that more especially in preacher's homes. The preacher's home life is so much more disagreeable than others because the preacher is at home so much; the gala

day for his suffering family is the day upon which he is called away for any purpose.

Butler accuses mankind in general of having very little regard for the truth. He repeats with the psalmist, "All men are liars," only he cannot offer the psalmist's excuse in extenuation of his offense since he says it deliberately and not in haste. He admits that there are exceptions, of course, but the truth seekers and truth lovers are few and far between. "Very few," he says, "care two straws about truth, or have any confidence that it is righter and better to believe what is true than what is untrue, even tho belief in the untruth may seem at first sight more expedient." The hero upon reaching this conclusion, which our author affirms most men arrive at sooner or later, recoils from it with horror. "Lord, I don't believe one word of it," he cries inwardly, "Strengthen Thou and confirm my disbelief." And yet in his most regenerate state "he takes the sacrament duly once a year as a sop to Nemesis lest he should again feel strongly upon any subject," and he affirms, "no man's opinions can be worth holding unless he knows how to deny them easily and gracefully upon occasion in the cause of charity." The contention that most men have little or no regard for the truth is certainly a denial of one of the plainest facts of all human history. Men may not know very much of the truth, they may ground their very lives upon suppositions which are afterwards demonstrated to be utterly false, but they do love truth and despise falsehood. History's pages are crowded with the records of what men have done and endured in the interests of what they have believed to be the truth. So many wars are known as religious wars. Saul breathing out threatenings and slaughter against those who were of a different way than his own, living before God in all good conscience while binding men and women and casting them into prison, has had innumerable predecessors and successors. We deplore such exhibitions of intolerance and we have learned a better way, and yet we cannot ignore the fact that they were fundamentally revelations of a genuine love of truth, and the fact that so many and grave mistakes were made as to the nature of truth and as to the best method for its advocacy does not alter the fact that it was to truth that they offered themselves willingly. I realize that this line of argument would be held as void of efficacy in the estimation

of our author, since he holds that it is ever the result, to the exclusion of the motive, which determines the morality of any act, but while I believe the result should receive all proper consideration yet the good will is even more fundamental for moral judgment. Browning's David was not mistaken when he said, " 'Tis not what man does that exalts him, but what man would do. See the king, I would help him but cannot, the wishes fall through. Could I wrestle to raise him from sorrow, grow poor to enrich, to fill up his life, starve my own out, I would, knowing which I know that my service is perfect." Against this set the quotation from the "Way of All Flesh." "The more I see the more sure I am that it does not matter why people do the right thing so long only as they do it, nor why they may have done the wrong if they have done it. The result depends upon the thing done and the motive goes for nothing."

On the whole I should say that the main impression made by "The Way of All Flesh" is that of unreality. The book is interesting, tho there is little of plot to it, and abounds in clever statements which seem to have been written mainly because the author expected them to shock the reader, but to me the characters seemed to be puppets who were made to act and speak according to their creator's whim, and not living and breathing human beings. The most outstanding thing as to the hero is his instability. He is one driven by the wind and tossed. His changes are rapid and spring from slight and wholly inadequate causes. He is not a character so much as a caricature; and the same thing may be said of most of the others who appear in the book. And while Bernard Shaw considers it as extraordinary study of English life, I think most people would agree that if it is a study of any life it is of a life existing only in the mind of the author; which judgment would perhaps please Butler above any other since he seems to have decided from the beginning to try to disagree with about everything that most persons would affirm.

STUDENT VOLUNTEER CONFERENCE.

Northfield, Jan. 3-6, 1918.

A quadrennial convention of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions is held once each student generation in order that every college man or woman may have one opportunity to be selected to represent their fellows at such a gathering. According to this theory, the eighth convention would have been called for some great center of population in 1918, a city large and hospitable enough to entertain nearly five thousand delegates for a period of five days. War conditions, however, made it impracticable to convene so large a number at this time, especially as immediately after the war there will be a pressing demand for a gathering larger than any of those already held. Hence it was decided to invite a select number of men and women to meet now at Northfield, across the river from Mt. Hermon where the Volunteer Movement originated in 1886.

The two delegates of the Yale School of Religion, Mr. Lew representing the student body, and Prof. Beach the Faculty, found an earnest company of nearly five hundred students and professors on the grounds of Northfield Seminary, at the center of which Sage Chapel provided the general meeting place, while at other halls minor meetings were convened and the delegates found lodgings. Though there was a noticeable lack of any "psychology of the crowd" to add intensity to the meeetings, in place of it there was a closeness of touch and possibilities of intimate acquaintance that more than made up for what is associated with Cleveland, Detroit, Nashville, Toronto and Kansas City, where these conventions have hitherto been held. Having attended seven of the eight, the writer regards the Northfield gathering in many respects the best of all. His only regret is that Yale was so meagerly represented, especially its School of Religion.

The convention was fortunate in its presiding officer who has in every instance been its president and who was one of the original hundred Student Volunteers of 1886, Dr. John R. Mott. Associated with him were the real originator of the Movement, Mr. Robert Wilder, who was likewise the leading spirit in founding the Movement in the Scandanavian countries and in Great Brit-

ain where he served it as secretary for many years, and Robert E. Speer the third of the Movement's "three mighties." With such men always at hand and with a program like the one offered the conference could not fail of effectiveness.

The main objectives of the meetings were to center the student thought on the great underlying foundations of all Missions in personal religion and belief, to bring before the convention the great fields in their present demands upon the Christian Church to present an adequate program for the student world as related to the ripe harvest fields and to consecrate money and life to ensure their speedy occupancy.

Speakers of compelling power were there, like Dr. Mott, Robert Speer, Robert Wilder, Bishops McDowell and Welch, Canon Gould, Professors Harry Ward of Boston University, J. Ross Stevenson of Princeton, and Douglas Mackenzie of Hartford Seminary; such missionary educators as Dr. Ewing of Forman Christian College in India, Dr. Barton, formerly president of Harpoot College, Turkey, and Chang Po-ling, who, while not formally a missionary was rightly introduced by Dr. Mott as China's foremost educator and greatest Christian layman; and student leaders, conspicuous among whom were David Porter, Rhodes scholar and head of the Student Department of the Association, Miss Holmquist representing the Women's Associations, and Dr. Weatherford, known by every Southern student through seventeen years' work among the colleges and universities of that field. Younger men and women from the student body and traveling secretaries of the Movement were likewise effectively used as witnesses on the closing day and evening.

That this fellowship and the atmosphere and messages of Northfield were not merely temporarily effective was proved by a forward step taken as the joint action of the leaders of the Student Men's and Women's Associations who presented as the program required by these strenuous days and the certain demands of post-bellum conditions the following proposals: The enrollment of two hundred thousand students in our colleges and universities in classes whose two-fold purpose should be to study the life and program of Jesus for an undivided world democracy, and also the missionary enterprise which is to carry to the non-Christian nations His message and life; the contribution of a

million dollars to aid in this twofold endeavor, especially on the foreign field; and to enlist enough adequately qualified missionary candidates to evangelize unreached nations. A frank discussion ended in a unanimous vote to undertake this proposition. To prove that the resolution was no more than a merely intellectual conviction, that little group of less than five hundred aided by a few old friends subscribed nearly $22,000 for the needs of the Volunteer Movement annually for four years, a larger amount than nearly five thousand delegates subscribed at Kansas City in the 1914 convention. These are very feeble echoes and inklings of a gathering which was wholly saturated with the sacrificial spirit of these great days of strife and of glad devotion of life and all to great causes, a convention that has rarely if ever been equalled, considering its size.

HARLAN P. BEACH.

IN MEMORIAM.

Through Prof. Macintosh the following account has been received:

At the Empire Hospital, Westminster, London, on the morning of November 21, 1917, Lieutenant Robert Fairgrieve, of the Canadian Army, and a member of the class of 1916 during its Middle year, died of wounds received at the battle front on the 18th of May. Mr. Fairgrieve came to Yale from McGill University, Montreal, in the fall of 1914. On the completion of his year's work in theology, he returned to Canada and enlisted in the Canadian Army, becoming a sergeant in due time in the Second Division of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, and as such he saw service in France.

During his spare time he assisted in the work of the army Y. M. C. A. Later he returned to England, entered the Royal Artillery Cadet School, Russell Square, and after the regular course of study received his commission. Not very long after his return to France he was brought back to London hopelessly wounded, his spine shattered and the legs and lower part of his body paralyzed. For more than six months he endured great suffering.

Mr. Arthur E. Marsh, of Westminster Chapel, who visited him often, writes: "I don't think I ever saw a greater piece of heroism than the way in which Fairgrieve bore his long period of suffering. Never was greater heroism seen on the battlefield."

This is the second recent member of the Yale School of Religion whose death through the war we are called upon to chronicle. Shortly after the entry of Turkey into the conflict, Rev. Solomon Akkelian, of the class of 1911, who was engaged in the work of the Christian Ministry in Turkey, was hanged by the Turks.

"They never fail who die in a great cause."

BOOK REVIEWS.

Library of Christian Co-operation. Edited by Charles S. MacFarland, General Secretary of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America. 6 vols. New York. 1917.

These volumes present the reports of the Federal Council and its commissions and committees to the Third Quadrennial Meeting held in Saint Louis, December, 1916. The first contains the official record of the meeting, with the administrative reports, and affords a general view of the activities of the Council. The second and third under the title "The Church and International Relations," are devoted to the report of the Commission on Peace and Arbitration. The fourth, under the same general title, is devoted to the report of the Commission on Relations with Japan. The sixth contains the report of the Commission on Christian Education; while the fifth, under the title, "Christain Co-operation in World-Redemption," contains reports of commissions on Evangelism, Social Service, Family Life, Temperance, Sunday Observance, Country Life, State and Local Federations, Federated Movements, Foreign Missions, with that of the Home Missions Council and that of the Committee on Negro Churches.

The books constitute a veritable encyclopedia of Christian co-operation. Few, perhaps, will read them through; but every Christian leader will find them of almost indispensable value for study and reference. If one has not the time to read the detailed

reports of the executive committee and general secretary, he will gain an excellent idea of the comprehensive service and opportunity of the Council from President Shailer Mathews' address and from the report of the Committee of Fifteen appointed to survey its work, (Vol. I, pp. 54-79). The volume on Relations with Japan is of fundamental importance, and should have a wide reading. Its appendices are especially rich, and include a reprint of Dr. Sidney L. Gulick's significant study-course on "America and the Orient: Outlines of a Constructive Policy." Volume VI contains Dr. B. S. Winchester's careful study of the present problem of the correlation of public and religious education in America, which has been reprinted under the title "Democracy and Religious Education." Volume V will be of most direct service to pastors, who will now find its subjects further dealt with in the reports of the Pittsburgh Conference of the Commission on Inter-Church Federations, which have been published under the title "Manual of Inter-Church Work."

The second and third volumes deal with the war-time service of the Federal Council, up to December, 1916. One should add to this the accounts, in the "Federal Council Bulletin" and other publications, of the increasing service which the Council is rendering since America has entered the war.

L. A. WEIGLE.

The Evolution of the Hebrew People and their influence on Civilization. By Laura H. Wild. Scribners, N. Y., 1917. Pp. 311. $1.50.

The purpose of this volume is "to relate Bible study to the great fields of knowledge that command a modern student's attention, to show something of the fascination of Bibly study pursued in this way, and to leave a positive conviction of the surpassing value of the great prophetic thoughts handed down to us." The treatment of the subject is in five parts: I: The Cultural Background of Hebrew Life. II. A Sketch of the Development of Religious Ideas. III. The Influence of Physical Environment upon the Development of the Hebrew Race. IV. Israel's Economic and Social Development. V. The Place in the World Thought of the Great Hebrew Prophetic Teachers.

The book is vivid and interesting and well adapted to awaken enthusiasm in students of college age. But the writer attempts to cover too many fields of human knowledge in one volume, with the result that too little space is left for the discussion of the Hebrew nation itself. Exception may also be taken to the confident dependence upon the reliability of the chronicler's account of Ezra's work, and to the treatment of the legend of the origin of the Septuagint as historical. As a book for collateral reading in connection with a more intensive study of Hebrew history and literature Miss Wild's book can be heartily commended for use with college classes.

George Dahl.

The Will to Freedom. By John N. Figgis. The Bross lectures delivered in Lake Forest College, Ill. Scribners; 320 pp. $1.25 net.

This book deserves consideration for these reasons: It is the expression of an able intellect of strong convictions; it interprets Nietzsche with sympathy for the man and insight into his problems, though with complete dissent from the ultimate ideal, implicit in his writings; the style is very near a model for a work of this kind, even though, in the opinion of the reviewer, the presentation is marred at times somewhat by excessive quotations.

Dr. Figgis furnishes a sufficient account of the events of Nietzsche's life. He distinguishes three periods of Nietzsche's development: I. The Schopenhauer-Wagner period; II. A period of intellectualism; III. His later and most characteristic stage—"When we speak of the Nietzschean doctrine, it is of the Nietzsche of this last period that we speak." According to Dr. Figgis, Nietzsche is in accord with Christianity in rejecting vulgar material prosperity as an ideal. "It is true also that his attitude to life is at bottom mystical. He sees that man as he is is not a beautiful sight." "Man can be saved only by becoming changed in his nature. That is the Christian doctrine of grace. Nietzsche is nearer to this than are those who preach a dogma of inevitable progress or those who deny sin."

Significant of Dr. Figgis' attitude, and perhaps not open to criticism is the statement: "Nietzsche saw that it was vain to expect to maintain the Christian values after Christian supernatural-

ism is surrendered." Nietzsche therefore logically denied both. The danger of Nietzsche "is deeper than any apparent barbarism. It lies in the cult of pride which he tends to stimulate." And "Nietzsche's ideal is essentially anti-Christian. It is based on the notion of pride. Not only is it anti-Christian; the superman, as Nietzsche preaches him, is inexpressibly vulgar." Nietzsche's importance "lies in the fact that he heralded the break-up of the nineteenth century. Christian apologetics should realize in Nietzsche the recrudescence of pagan morality and the fact of hatred. This is the sort of book that might be expected from the author of "Civilization at the Cross Roads." It is eminently quotable; but the quotations are seen to best advantage in their context.

EDWARD W. NICHOLS.

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COMMUNICATIONS.

One purpose of a publication such as this is to provide a medium for the free expression of public opinion concerning questions of local interest. In this School there is no other agency which makes it possible for a student or a member of the faculty to give a suggestion or a statement of attitude to the whole membership of the School. It is next to impossible to set an hour for a mass meeting which is satisfactory to everybody, and the bulletin boards (apart from other disadvantages) are usually covered with two or three layers of official notices and advertisements. But the Quarterly reaches every one, students, faculty, and alumni, and if it is read it may well serve as a crier for the School.

Since the editors cannot contrive to be in touch with the opinions of the whole student body, and less still with those of the faculty, it is desirable that subscribers write out their suggestions and turn them in for publication. Signed communications of reasonable length, if they are handed to some member of the staff in time, will be published in each succeeding issue. Contributions for the next number should be submitted before March 1.

A CHANCE FOR LOYALTY.

A definite movement in the direction of School unity has been begun. The agency through which the work is being done is the class organizations. A committee of the class presidents in conjunction with the Dean, has prepared a scheme for regular get-together meetings of certain mixed groups of men, and occasional joint meetings of the whole School. With these periodic gatherings as a center, it is hoped that a real sense of organic unity in the School body may be developed.

Every one is agreed that such a result is highly to be desired, but theoretical assent and practical assistance are frequently far separated. It is not enough that we look upon the work of the committee in due time, and pronounce it very good; there are few things that can kill an infant project so effectually as a smothering dead-weight of passive approval.

Three class presidents and a half-dozen enthusiasts cannot make a unified student body any more than a teaspoonful of leaven can make a loaf. It is necessary that every man in the School, whether instructor or student, be willing to waive a certain amount of his personal convenience, if need be, to help make the common undertaking a success. Some men will have to sacrifice more than others without an added visible reward; such is the rule of this world in every field that is worth entering. But if all of us begin to regard ourselves as fellow workers in this department of Yale, the new feeling of kinship with each other and with the University will be worth all it costs.

One of the most attractive bits of work of the department Y. M. C. A has done this winter is the mailing of holiday letters to each of the men who have left the School during the past year to take service with the United States government or one of her allies. This season is a hard one for those fellows at best, and any sort of message to show them that they are still a part of the life here must be welcome. It would be absurd to urge that everybody in the School sit down and write to each of the men in service; such a proceeding would make a deal of annoyance for busy men here, for the busier men at the front, and for the postal employes who are busiest of all. But it is certain that an occasional message to one of our friends among the soldiers—and we all have them—will mean time well spent.

The meeting of the School at rhetoricals on January 9 may well prove one of the most significant events of the School year. There was enough of impressiveness in the meeting itself, without so much as thinking of possible consequences, to mark it with red on the calendar. Not since the evening of the Dean's opening address has the body of the chapel been filled nearly full of students gathered for any purpose. Not within the last three years, at any rate, have students and professors talked so frankly

and earnestly on any question of equal moment. These things were notable in themselves. The results of the discussion, if increased attendance and interest in the chapel services mean anything, are already beginning to appear. We may hope confidently that the conferences of the student representatives with the faculty members have brought to light suggestions which co-operative effort may make of exceeding value.

SPIRITUALITY.

What is spirituality? A person is sometimes characterized as a "spiritual" person. Sermons are often described as "spiritual" sermons. We have even heard prayers called "spiritual" prayers, "prevailing" prayers. This is alright so far as it goes; but we must remember that when we are upon our knees it is God, not we, who must prevail. It is possible to pauperize ourselves by importunity.

Is there not a little confusion in many of our current conceptions of "Spirituality?" Are they not likely to do a little injustice both to the term itself and the person whom it describes? Probably a true meaning is set forth in Jesus' conflict with the Pharisees. To them Jesus did not seem to be very Saintly or Spiritual; while to Jesus the Pharisees were blind to the genuine, sincere, and really great concerns of common life. Many a time Jesus pricked their weakness as with the point of a needle!

Whatever "Spirituality" is it draws its strength from a deep well; it sinks its shaft below the surface of appearances. It does not divide the world of religion and life into logic-tight labelled compartments and put a notice on the doors. It counts nothing common or unclean; regards nothing as insignificant. Jesus suggested that it had no use for phylacteries. But suppose we think about it.

The committee chosen by the three classes of the School to confer with the Dean as to closer unity and a more generous spirit, met at his home on Friday afternoon of the 12th inst. After discussing the various difficulties and desires, possibilities and probabilities the following things were decided:

(1) The hour for rhetoricals shall once a month be given over to a meeting for fellowship and the deepening of the Spiritual life.

(2) The Middler and Junior classes shall arrange for class prayer and fellowship meetings at their own discretion and convenience.

(3) Some changes shall be made in the conduct of the daily Chapel services.

(4) Once a month, some evening, the entire School shall meet as far as possible. For this meeting the class presidents have divided the School enrollment into three groups. Each group shall in turn prepare and be responsible for the evening's programme.

(5) For purposes of mutual help and encouragement various meetings will be held by members of the Faculty at their homes, and questions of the hour will be discussed.

Men, let us get together!

REVIEW.

THE MILLENNIAL HOPE. A PHASE OF WAR-TIME THINKING.

By Shirley Jackson Case. University of Chicago Press. 1918. $1.25 net. Postage extra. Weight, 14 ounces.

The idea that the ills of modern society are to be righted by a sudden destruction of the world was labelled as pessimistic and pernicious by Shirley Jackson Case, Professor of Early Church History and New Testament Interpretation in the University of Chicago. "In principle this idea strikes at the very heart of all democratic ideals," says Professor Case, writing on the millennial hope as related to the world-war.

Is the millenium near? Is our world about to be destroyed? Is Christ soon to return in glory to set up a new kingdom upon a purified earth? These were the questions answered by Professor Case.

"Propagandists have been urging belief in the speedy end of the world and the hopelessness of any remedial measures for effecting permanent improvement in present conditions," he declared. "In the name of religion, it is maintained that human efforts to make the world a safer and better place are wholly misguided. God is said to will that conditions shall grow constantly worse as the hour of impending doom approaches. For one who holds consistently to this opinion it is nonsense to talk of human responsibility. This type of teaching, now being vigorously inculcated in many circles, readily plays into the hands of all enemies of social and political reform. By persuading men that the rapid deterioriation and early destruction of the world are determined upon by divine decree, the enemy of reform has a mighty instrument for strangling the citizen's sense of civic duty. This is equally true whether the call to service is local or national and international. It is a vicious atttude in the present hour of the world's need, when the call to duty is nation-wide and international."

Discussing this belief in a quick castatrophic termination of the world, Professor Case reviews similar theories down through the ages, and concludes: "It is sheer nonsense to talk dolefully about the gradual deterioriation of society. History exhibits one long process of evolving struggle by which humanity as a whole rises constantly higher in the scale of civilization and attainment, bettering its condition from tme to time through its greater skill and industry. Man learns to surmise that evils are to be eliminated by strenuous effort and gradual reform rather than by the catastrophic intervention of Deity. Modern scientific thinking is funda-

mentally optimistic of the future. The function of religion is also remedial. The pessimistic philosophy underlying premillennial teaching, spurning all serious effort to secure betterment of the world by means of popular education, social reforms, remedial legislation, or other agencies for improving undesirable conditions, is especially to be deplored at the present time."

Professor Case has made an exhaustive study of the various beliefs in a sudden ending of the world. In a volume on "The Millennial Hope: A Phase of War-Time Thinking," issued by the University of Chicago Press, he seeks to prove that these ideas are no longer tenable. He points out that the ancients, Gentiles and Jews, and both the early and later Christians, from time to time firmly believed in a catastrophe that would end the world, and bring a new reign of the Messiah. Specific dates were often set as the day of the millennium, he suggests, but the day never came. In the modern era, Alsted fixed the date at 1694. The Ronsdorf sect prophesied the millennium for 1730. Bengel predicted the end of the world for 1836. Edward Irving, a Scotch Presbyterian, believed Christ's recoming would occur in 1864. William Miller, founder of the Adventists, thought he foresaw that the millennium would arrive in 1843, but later moved the date down to October 22, 1844. Charles T. Russell, writing in 1891, said that the millennium had been "invisibly inaugurated" in 1874, and he expected the end of the world in 1914.

"The new features of the modern propaganda," continues Professor Case, "consist chiefly of references to recent events in history, the foreshadowings of which are ingeniously discovered in biblical prophecy. The world-war which began in 1914 has given new opportunity for the advocacy of these views, nor have their adherents been slow to avail themselves of this advantage. Affirming that they are able to discover new fulfillments of prophecy in the stirring events of these times, they insist anew that the betterment of present conditions can be effected only through a sudden destruction of the present order to be followed by the inauguration of Christ's millennial reign upon earth.

"But the task of religion," Professor Case contends, "is to stimulate successive generations throughout unnumbered centuries to aim at the highest moral and spiritual attainment of which men in all future ages may find themselves capable. This outlook demands much strenuous endeavor and may entail many discouragements ere the gigantic task is accomplished, but it leaves no room for pessimism of the premillennial type."

SCHOOL NEWS.

Faculty.

Dean Brown spent the first two days of this year at Camp Devens speaking to the soldiers.

Prof. Bacon is busy working on the Commentary on Matthew continuing his series on the Synoptic Gospels, the first of which appeared under the title *"The Beginnings of Gospel Story."* He hopes soon to have in the press another volume entitled *"A General Introduction to the Synoptic Writings."* His article on *"Prof. Torrey's Theory of the Date and Authorship of Acts"* appears in the January number of the *American Journal of Theology.*

Prof. Macintosh is conducting an Open Forum in the First Baptist Church every Sunday evening, discussing such vital themes as "What shall we believe about God?" "What shall we believe about a future life?" and other problems that concern the relation of the Christian to the present war.

Prof. Weigle delivered a lecture at Oil City, Pa., early this month on "The Child's Right To Play" as one of a course of community lectures in Religious Education. He has just completed a course of lectures in the Y. W. C. A. Training School in New York City on "The Psychology of Religion." On 30th Dec., 1917, he spoke to the soldiers at Camp Devens. Last month he met with the International Sunday School Lesson Committee in Philadelphia.

Prof. Winchester has just finished a series of lectures in the Hartford School of Pedagogy on the subjects "Principles and Methods of Religious Educations" and "Normal Class Methods." He is to deliver two series of ten lectures each at the Hartford City Institute and at New Canaan, Conn., on "Methods of Teaching With Special Reference To Sunday School Classes." As chairman of the Commission on Christian Education he met with the committee last month at Cincinnati, Ohio, in connection with the annual meeting of the executive committee of the Federal Council of the Churches of America.

Prof. Sneath spent the Christmas season at Annapolis with his son who is an officer in the navy.

Prof. Dahl has been elected as the treasurer of the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis.

Letters from Prof. Archer state that owing to delays of various sorts he was leaving India for his work in Mesopotamia as late as November, since which time no word has vome from him. The Indian delay enabled him to do considerable work for the Indian National Council of the Association, and he had journeyed among the associations from Calcutta to Bombay, speaking to good audiences, among them those at Poona, where E. J. Simonds, who left us in 1911, is the secretary with a large work in charge. Professor Archer speaks of preaching in Hindi in his former field and of meeting old friends there. He regards his detention in India of great value for his further work here.

Prof. Beach attended the annual meeting of the Board of Missionary Preparation in New York the first week in December, where he presented his completed report on presenting Christianity in Confucian lands. He was also present at the meeting of board secretaries of the United States and Canada at Garden City, Jan. 15, 16, where he further reported on that subject, and also read a paper on "The Question of Missionary Statistics." Resolutions read thereafter assured the continuance of the Bureau of Missionary Statistics of which he is the leading spirit. He was also present at the East Northfield Student Volunteer Conference Jan. 3-6.

The School closed for Christmas holidays on the noon of 21st Dec., 1917, and reopened on the morning of 8th Jan., 1918.

Thirty-two out of the six hundred and ninety-three stars of the Yale service flag have been contributed by the School. Eighteen of these men are in regular military service.

We are glad to announce the engagement of Mr. Ralph S. Hudson '18, to Miss Dorothea Curtis of New Haven. Mr. Hudson is now in Allentown, Pa., in the Ambulance Corps service.

Announcement has been received of the marriage of Mr. Frederic W. Hagan '19, who is a corporal in the 350th Infantry at Camp Dodge, Iowa.

Mr. Elmer M. Hersch '19, was married to Miss Sadie Swartz last Thanksgiving Day at Mansfield, Ill. He was rejected from military service for lack of good eyesight and so he is now engaged in boys' work of the Y. M. C. A. at Waterloo, Iowa.

Mr. R. I. Farmer, '19, was married to Miss Leah Fogo, of Wellsville, Ohio, on Tuesday evening, February 5, 1918. The romance began in college where Mrs. Farmer was instructor in piano. The wedding was a double ceremony, a twin sister being wedded to Mr. Wm. Floto, who is in the medical detachment at Camp Sherman.

Mr. T. T. Lew represented the student body of the School at the Student Volunteer Conference held at East Northfield, Mass., during Jan. 3-6, 1918.

In addition to the roster of the School of Religion men in war service which we published in the last issue of the QUARTERLY we publish the following names:

Mr. Rodney McQuary, '16, is chaplain of the 333rd Field Artillery, Camp Grant, Rockford, Ill. On December 28 he was married to Miss Marie Longman at Albion, Ill.

Mr. Scuyler Pratt, '16, is in the Army at Camp Lewis, American Lake, Wash.

Mr. Carl W. Pultz, '18, has recently entered the Y. M. C. A. service at Camp Belvoir, Washington.

Mr. Abbo E. Abben, '19, has been in the Y. M. C. A. service since last fall, at Coatesville, Pa.

Mr. Murray S. Chism, '19, is at Camp Devens doing Y. M. C. A. work.

Mr. Alvin B. Gurley, '19, is in the Navy and has been at Brooklyn, N. Y.

Mr. Frederick W. Hagan, '19, is in the Army and stationed at Camp Dodge, Iowa. He is a corporal and was recently married.

Mr. Clarence Y. Wigfall, '19, is now in the Army Y. M. C. A.

Mr. Howard R. McCartney, '17, who has been in charge of the Community Walfare House at Purchase, N. Y., left last week for one of the Texas camps to do Y. M. C. A. work.

Rev. Oscar E. Maurer, '06, who had three months' leave of absence for Y. M. C. A. work at Camp Meade, has been granted an additional leave of absence for one year by Center Church, New Haven, for Y. M. C. A. work in France. He sailed early in December, and word has been received from him that he is now in active duty.

Rev. P. E. Mathias, '08, and since his graduation from the School of Religion, pastor of King's Highway Church in Bridgeport, Conn., has entered the Army Y. M. C. A. and is stationed at Camp Shelby, Mississippi.

Rev. Robert E. Brown, '04, pastor of the Second Congregational Church, Waterbury, Conn., has been given a six months' leave of absence and is now in France in the Army Y. M. C. A.

Rev. John F. Hall, '15, received his commission as second lieutenant last August at Fort Benjamin Harrison, has recently been promoted to first lieutenant and is now with the 331st Infantry, N. A., at Camp Sherman, Chillicothe, Ohio.

Mr. Ralph O. Hudson, '17, is in the Ambulance Corps at Allentown, Pa.

Mr. Dumas Malone, '16, has enlisted in the Marine Corps.

Mr. George Stewart, special student, is an enlisted man at Camp Devens.

Rev. Bryant Wilson, '13, received his commission as chaplain of the 364th Infantry, a California regiment, on October 26th, and is stationed at Camp Lewis, Tacoma, Wash.

ALUMNI NOTES.

Rev. Donald J. Cowling, '06, Ph. D. Yale, '09, and since the fall of 1909 the president of Carleton College, Carleton, Minn., was recently elected president of the Association of American Colleges, at the last meeting of the association.

Rev. C. S. Walker, '15, is now pastor of the First Methodist Episcopal Church, South, at Norman, Oklahoma.

Rev. H. A. Blanning, '17, recently sailed for France with a group of fifty-one men who are to do Y. M. C. A. work.

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